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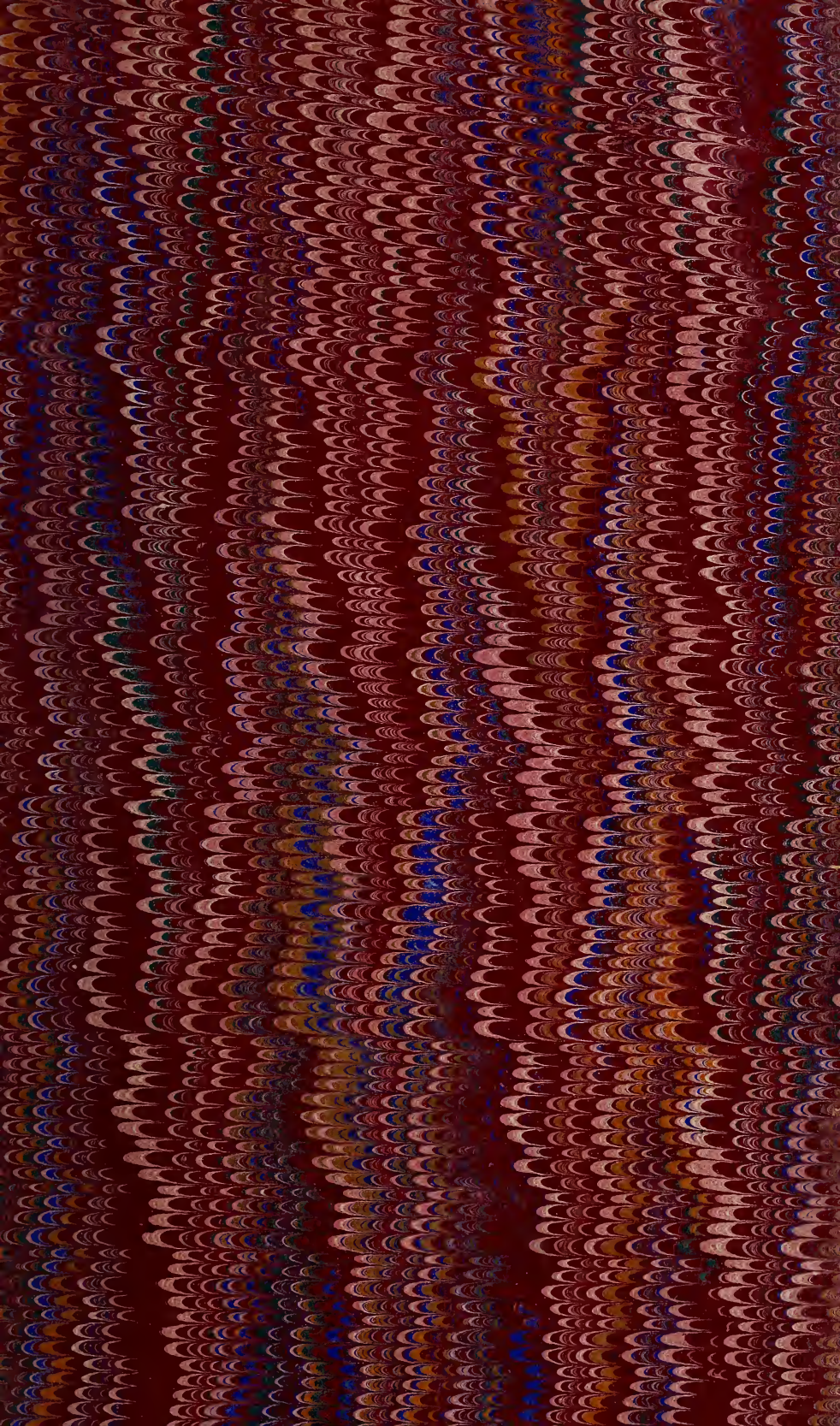
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.













✓ Paes, José Antonio

# IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

IN RELATION TO THE

PRESENT SITUATION

OF

V E N E Z U E L A ;

AND THE ATTEMPT OF

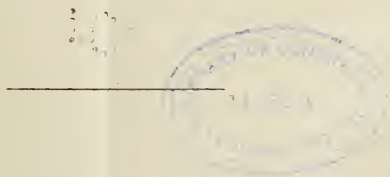
GENERAL JOSE TADEO MONAGAS

TO ESTABLISH A

DESPOTIC GOVERNMENT

IN THAT COUNTRY:

WITH A FEW INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.



NEW-YORK:

1848.

9B#



# INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

IN RELATION TO THE PRESENT STATE OF

## VENEZUELA,

AND THE

TRUE QUESTION AT ISSUE IN THAT REPUBLIC.

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THE contemporaneous history of those extensive regions which constitute the Spanish American Republics is a subject of great and growing importance to the United States of America, and to the cause of liberty and good government throughout the civilized world. Occupying a large portion of the globe, with every variety of climate, abounding in rich productions, and embracing some of the most eligible positions for a vast commerce, these countries require only well organized and permanent institutions to develop their immense resources and powerfully to contribute to the happiness of the human race. The late war with Mexico, the consequent information obtained of the natural productions of one of these States, and the great importance suddenly acquired by California from having passed into the possession of a well constituted and stable government, are proofs of the influence which the Spanish Republics must exert whenever they shall enjoy the happiness of good government.

There is nothing in the history of these States to warrant the apprehension, entertained by many of those who have not carefully examined the subject, that these Republics are incapable of self-government. Their revolutions and political commotions are the necessary result of the change which took place, not quite forty years since, from a state of mere colonies, dependent altogether on the mother country, to the rank of free and independent Powers. Wherever a similar transition has taken place it has been attended with similar results. The march of nations in the career of rational freedom is necessarily slow and attended with serious difficulties. Examine the case of those countries where the science of government is most advanced, and where man enjoys the greatest security to life and property, and it will be found that this advantageous condition was preceded by a long series of years of political troubles, of revolutions and of bloodshed. Take, for instance,

the case of England. How many generations passed away, what contentions between different parties, what revolutions and wars, what bloodshed, before the British constitution was permanently established and the people of England secured those rights which they have so faithfully transmitted to their descendants in both hemispheres ! Let it not be supposed that this was rather the consequence of those remote periods in the world's history, when civilization had made but little progress, than the result of natural causes. In our own times we have seen France, one of the most civilized and polished nations of Europe, struggling to establish liberal institutions, and we have seen anarchy, despotism and finally monarchy succeed each other after years of successful revolution. Even at this very time she is engaged in the great experiment of free government ; thus far revolution has been successful, a dynasty has disappeared, but nothing of a permanent character has yet supplied the place. May she not in her present struggle afford another lamentable proof that the science of government, and it might be added, of self-government is the most difficult of all sciences. Learned and philosophic Germany does not as yet present a different or more satisfactory spectacle.

The case of the United States of America stands isolated in the history of great nations, but still it is easily distinguishable from other instances. The colonies which subsequently composed this great Union, were the inheritors of all that was valuable in British institutions. To pass over the effects of habit, the early colonists brought with them into their new settlements all the rights and privileges of British subjects. All that had cost England ages of contention and oceans of blood was imported in a single day, as it were, into her North American colonies. The advantages secured by Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights, Trial by Jury, the liberty of the press, were as much the privilege of the colonies as of the mother country. Nor were these rights a mere dead letter ; the colonists understood them from habit and education and *used* them, and their revolution was the result of an attempt to deprive them of some of those rights. How different was the case of the Spanish American States ! In all that appertains to government, after achieving their independence, they were obliged to commence by laying the corner-stone of the edifice, not as persons who understood all the component parts and the fair proportions of the building from *actual experience*, but as persons who were willing to imitate what they had only *heard of*.

But notwithstanding these serious difficulties, some of the South American States have made great advances in the career of liberty and good government, in the comparatively short period of their political existence. Among these states the Republic of Venezuela stood pre-eminent. In the year 1830, shortly after the dissolution of Colombia, of which Venezuela was a component part, she established a written Constitution under the auspices and guidance of that distinguished patriot General José Antonio Páez, one of the founders of South American Independence. That instrument, which is modelled on the Constitution of the United States, secures every advantage of rational freedom to the citizen. The legislative power consists of a House of Representatives and of the Senate, both elected by the people. The Executive power is administered by a President, also elected by the people for a period of four years; and the Judiciary consists of the courts of law established under the Constitution. Under this Constitution, voluntarily adopted by the people through their delegates, Venezuela commenced a career of prosperity and progress unparalleled in the other South American Republics. It had scarcely been adopted and received the warm support of General Páez, when in 1831 a military insurrection, headed by GENERAL JOSE T. MONAGAS, broke out against the government. On the 15th of January a declaration was drawn up and signed in the city of Aragua by the conspirators, and its tenor plainly indicates the character and political principles of the leaders. They refused by this instrument to acknowledge the existing government and assigned as a reason that there was no security for any person, as the clergy and the worthy officers of the army were oppressed and exiled; that the Constitution attacked religion and subjected the clergy to the payment of taxes, and deprived them and the military of their special privileges. In order that a correct idea may be formed of the justice of these complaints it is proper to remark that the Constitution of Venezuela did not establish any religion of State, and placed all citizens upon a just footing in relation to the payment of taxes without regard to special privileges or immunities. This written declaration concluded by proclaiming the integrity of Colombia and appointing GENERAL JOSE TADEO MONAGAS civil and military chief. General Páez was called upon to suppress this military insurrection and to establish the supremacy of law. He succeeded in this patriotic mission, and on the 24th of June granted a pardon to Gen. Monagas and his adherents.

In 1835, Dr. José M. Vargas, a civilian, was elected President of the Republic, and shortly after his election another military insurrection broke out, of which GEN. MONAGAS was again the master spirit. This time they openly demanded the establishment of a military government and that a Convention should be assembled ; they pretended to re-organize Colombia, to establish the Catholic religion as the religion of State and to revive the military privileges and immunities. Gen. Paez was again authorized to quell these disturbances, and the consequence was a new victory over the enemies of the Constitution, and another pardon granted to Gen. Monagas.

It will thus be seen that ever since the foundation of the Constitution of Venezuela, Gen. Monagas has been the opponent of that code, of the institutions of his country, the equal rights of the people, and the advocate of military power and religious intolerance. Be it also remembered, that all these military insurrections, instigated and headed by General Monagas, were all directed against the lawful government and against the chosen and elected candidates of the people ; that in all these rebellions, there was a direct attack made against the written Constitution, freely adopted in 1830 by the delegates of the people ; and that General Paez invariably was called upon and authorized by the government to maintain the Constitution ; that he always proved faithful to the trust reposed in him ; that he put down these rebellions, vanquished General Monagas and generously pardoned him under the general authority granted by Congress.

If General Monagas on these different occasions, by his overt acts and written declarations, was the invariable opponent of the Constitution and existing institutions of his country, from their very foundation, is it to be belived that he is now the supporter of that Constitution and of free and liberal institutions ? The sequel will prove that as soon as he secured *an opportunity* of destroying those institutions with probable impunity, he embraced it and carried his despotic principles into action with unheard of barbarity.

In 1846 another election for President was to take place, and a great political error was committed by the friends of order and of law ; the error of selecting for Chief Magistrate a political opponent, with the view of gaining him over to the cause of order. It was supposed that the opposition and enmity of General Monagas against the Constitution and laws of his country, arose chiefly from personal ambition, and that peace and order would be permanently

secured by satisfying that ambition. The people of Venezuela and General Paez were mistaken ; the opposition of Monagas arose from a deep hatred to liberal institutions and from a love of military power. General Paez was requested to become a candidate himself for the Presidency, but he pertinaciously refused, and when urged by large numbers who insisted on his election declared that he would rather quit the country. He warmly supported the election of General Monagas, expecting permanently to secure peace for his country. The influence of Paez with the people, as one of the founders of Independence and the supporter of civil government, secured the election of General Monagas. Shortly after his election and installation he commenced a series of acts in open violation of law and of the Constitution. He removed all the officers and commanders of the militia and substituted his own creatures ; refused to appoint as Governors of Provinces the persons designated by law, and placed in their stead individuals addicted to his principles. He collected and took possession of all the arms belonging to the State and placed them in the hands of his own partisans. He disarmed the *active* or regular militia and called into service the militia *of reserve*, without the authority of law required by the Constitution. It is proper to explain here that the regular militia is composed of private citizens who furnish their own arms and receive no pay, and that the militia of reserve is composed of citizens who do not furnish their arms and are *paid* when called into service under the previous authority of law. It is then plainly to be perceived that General Monagas could find more pliant tools in this militia of reserve.

The result of the acts of General Monagas, as President, in open violation of law, was that an accusation or articles of impeachment were presented against him before the House of Representatives, *in the manner provided by the Constitution*. On the 24th of January 1848 the House took into consideration the accusation preferred against the President in the exercise of a power vested in that body by the Constitution. On that very day, and before any action could be had by the Representatives of the People, the House was attacked by the militia of reserve, several members of Congress and other inoffensive citizens were murdered and Congress was virtually dissolved. A narration of the occurrence and the subsequent acts of General Monagas will be found in the annexed documents of General Paez. Suffice it to say, that General Monagas, assisted by his armed myrmidons, *compelled* the Representatives of

the People to assemble again in Congress, under a threat that unless they met again all the families of the capital would be murdered and that he could not be answerable for the result. It is easy to imagine what must have been the state of the deliberations of such a Congress, and it is not to be wondered at that the first act of Congress was to pass a law pardoning all persons concerned in the bloody tragedy of the 24th of January.

Shortly after the occurrence related above, General Monagas wrote a letter to General Paez asking his advice. The reply of General Paez will be found annexed.

What is then the question at issue in Venezuela? Does it present the case of two military leaders contending for the supremacy? Or does it present the spectacle of a minority of the people contending against the majority? Not at all. The case presented is briefly this. The President of the Republic is considered to have violated in a scandalous manner the written Constitution of the land; the Representatives of the People, in the exercise of one of the powers vested by that instrument, take into consideration articles of impeachment preferred against him and they are immediately attacked and murdered by the armed force at the instigation and with the connivance of the President; Congress is dissolved and subsequently *compelled* to assemble again. Under similar circumstances, what would citizens of the United States have done had the occurrence taken place in their own country? What would have been the duty of all true patriots? How would a Washington have acted if called upon by the people to support the Constitution and to prevent the establishment of military rule? It might be urged that the Representatives of the People acted *imprudently* in exercising one of the powers vested in them by the Constitution; but still they were engaged in a legal act, and the imprudent exercise of that right would not justify General Monagas in murdering them and impeding their action.

But would it have been prudent to wink at the acts of Monagas and to have withheld his impeachment? History will furnish an answer. One act of intentional usurpation is generally followed by another. The nation that patiently submits to see its Constitution and laws trampled under foot, has invariably lost its freedom and degenerated into a nation of slaves. The political principles of General Monagas are sufficiently known; and what had Venezuela to expect by allowing him to continue with impunity in his career? Let the answer be furnished by a neighboring nation on

the same continent, which now groans under the iron rule of a military despot. The course of all usurpers is and has ever been the same; it allows of no hope but what arises from immediate and decided opposition. "Obsta principiis" is the only safe rule. In some cases it is possible that a re-action, or the slow operation of time, may save a people from the dangers of an usurpation. But it is with the body politic as with the human body—there are some diseases of so violent and corrupting a nature that the patient dies before the re-action can take place.

The history of the usurpation of Monagas has been written and is daily commented upon by enlightened foreigners residing in Venezuela. Their testimony may be considered impartial. We see in the daily journals of the United States accounts of the violation of private and diplomatic correspondence by the Monagas government; of the closing of the ports of the Republic to persons of all ages and sexes who sought to leave the country; of the forced contributions arbitrarily exacted from peaceful citizens. By what authority of law are all these acts done? Are they authorized by the Constitution of Venezuela?

The above remarks are intended to place in its true light the issue now pending in Venezuela, and to submit to the impartial judgment of the people of the United States the motives which have impelled one of the leaders of South American independence, the firm and constant supporter of the Constitution and laws of Venezuela, to take up arms against the usurper on the call of the people.

The following documents published by him to the world will more fully explain those motives.

*New-York, Dec. 12th, 1848.*



## LETTER

FROM GENERAL JOSE A. PAEZ TO GENERAL JOSE  
T. MONAGAS, PRESIDENT.

EL RASTRO, *January 31st, 1848.*

*To his Excellency Gen. J. T. MONAGAS,*

*President of the Republic :*

MY esteemed General, Companion in Arms, and Friend—I acknowledge receipt of the letter of your Excellency of the 24th inst., in which you are pleased to inform me of the horrible crime committed by armed men against the National Congress ; and you invite me to save the country, and aid you with my advice.

On the 26th I received the first news of the nefarious occurrence, and I have been subsequently informed of all the details. For the first time in my life I have mourned that I was born in a land where such abominable atrocities are committed in the name of liberty. I am deeply affected. I feel my soul distracted, and my heart oppressed with profound sorrow. What has happened in my country ? I ask myself, and cannot find an answer ;—so grave, so extraordinary, so barbarous, and immoral, has been the deed committed on the 24th, in that Capital, the seat of Government—a deed perpetrated by a part of the armed force organized by the government itself. Do not the authors of so great a wickedness tremble when they contemplate the days of bitterness which they have prepared for the country ? Is there a man who can harbor the idea that a people who have made so many sacrifices for freedom, the heroic people of Venezuela, can overlook without condemnation the butchery of several of their worthy Representatives, in the very hall for holding their sittings, and of a number of other esteemed citizens, without bringing the matter to a severe trial ? I think quite the contrary.

My grief is increased by the conviction I entertain of the great moral responsibility resting on me, on account of my

having been the person who made the greatest efforts to elevate your Excellency to the Presidency! I have taken no part in the administration of your Excellency, nor in the former administrations to which I have not belonged. I have no complaint to make on this account; but I must assure your Excellency that, could I have had the least influence in your policy, I never would have advised you to cease to respect the sovereignty of the people, nor to evade the judgment to which public opinion summoned you. I would have exposed my life by your side to restrain the body of militia that attacked Congress, rather than have influenced them to show themselves indifferent to the atrocious and unheard of crime. The people of Caracas, that virtuous people, notwithstanding the excitement sought to be created, have given a signal example of morality. The people of Caracas understood well what risks they ran in the career of freedom, by helping those who conceived the dark project of assassinating Congress.

What advice can I give you in the situation in which you have placed yourself? No one can believe this any longer possible. Your Excellency appears before the country as the greatest, the most ungrateful, and the most revengeful, of all my enemies. I have however been always seen engaged in endeavoring to dissipate this injurious opinion, and laboring without reserve to persuade all that there was the best understanding between us, convinced as I was of the advantages resulting from this to the Republic.

Now your Excellency no longer inspires confidence to that portion of our society which is the soundest, most conscientious and the strongest, because of its intelligence and other good qualities, for its sense of honor, and honor is never cowardly! If your Excellency is enraged against this portion of society, you will never, *never* subdue it. You will never succeed in destroying thousands of men who are united, and who with looks of indignation pledge themselves to die for liberty—for that liberty so well guaranteed by the Constitution of 1830.

I have been called by those nearest to your Excellency, and even by your Excellency (as I am informed,) a friend of the opposition party. I would be glad if the editors of public papers would publish my answers to the letters they have addressed to me, urging me to speak. I authorize them to do so, and I give a like permission to those of my fellow-citizens to whom I have written within the last eight months. Then your Excellency would be constrained to acknowledge the moral co-operation which I have given to your

administration, and how faithful I have been to the friendship which we promised to each other—a friendship which ought to have produced great advantages to the country; but, unfortunately, the result has been otherwise. What blindness! I have been disappointed, I confess, in my endeavors; but I have nothing to repent of in my conduct.

A native of this land, and having a name bestowed on me by my country, I must in all her trials exert all the influence of that name in her behalf. I cannot be indifferent to the high crime which has been perpetrated against the nation, by the assassination of some of her Representatives, and to the degradation and humiliation sought to be imposed on the others. What is pretended? That Venezuela should keep silence as to the past, tolerate the present, and assist in bringing about that future which the existence of anarchy is preparing for her? By throwing a veil over the execrable crime of the 24th, will there be any hopes that another independent Congress will ever assemble in Venezuela? And without this periodical meeting of the representatives of the people will the representative system be preserved? I think we cannot expect it. I do not expect it.

They wish to persuade us that Congress is engaged in the discharge of its important duties. Is there any freedom left in that Congress which has just passed through the horrors of the 24th,—which is surrounded by bayonets, and the members of which are threatened with the assassination of the families of the capital if they do not assemble? I cannot speak of these acts without expressing all the indignation they have caused me,—all the detestation with which I regard them. History does not present an example of iniquities perpetrated with such coolness. Venezuela is compelled to deplore the deaths of some of her most worthy Representatives, and is now enduring the disgrace of seeing those members who escaped on the 24th assembled in Congress under the safeguard of those very persons who had conspired against the lives of all! This is a provoking insult to the intelligence of Venezuelans, and to the bravery which they have displayed on a thousand trying occasions. The Republic will not sanction these iniquities.

Although I have no reason to expect that my advice will be heeded by your Excellency, I think proper to lay before you the only measures that can allay the excitement of the people, and prevent disaster.

I propose that your Excellency should peaceably submit to the trial to which public opinion has summoned you, for many of your acts which are regarded as being clearly against the Constitution. I propose that you withdraw all the armed force from the Capital, and that you allow both Houses to change their sittings to another place, as one House had already resolved, in order that they may deliberate dispassionately and freely upon the state of the Republic.

This is the only measure which I judge capable of inspiring some confidence, and the only one which can place your Excellency on good ground. If your Excellency reject this advice, who can prevent the war which has already commenced by the assassination of the Representatives of the people? Your Excellency, who received the Republic in peace, will answer before God, for the consequences of the war. As to myself I have only to say, that I have contracted solemn engagements with the Republic, and have sacred duties to discharge towards it, and that I am determined to discharge them with the greatest decision. Nor could it be otherwise, when the Representatives of the people have just given us a practical lesson of singular heroism. Unprotected, occupying their seats, disregarding the frequent threats against their lives, they awaited death with tranquillity, to save the institutions of their country. Can I, who am honored with the office of General-in-chief, surrounded by brave men who are crowding around me from different points to offer their lives and their fortunes in defence of their country, disregard all these scenes, and contribute by my indifference to confirm the *rule of Terror*? No! A THOUSAND TIMES, NO! It is my duty to perish, rather than to witness with seeming serenity the ignominious death of the Republic.

I subscribe myself the friend and companion in arms of your Excellency,

JOSÉ ANTONIO PAEZ.

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#### ADDRESS OF GENERAL PAEZ TO HIS FELLOW CITIZENS.

JOSE ANTONIO PAEZ, General-in-Chief of the armies of the Republic, and of the army of operation, to re-establish the Constitution of 1830.

Venezuelans: Hear with horror the statement which I am about to

make to you, in relation to an occurrence which stains the glorious name and threatens the complete destruction of the Republic. Hear, that you may know those who have charge of the public power, those who accepted the honorable trust of protecting your rights. Hear, and with the indignation of Republicans ; raise your voices against tyranny and prepare to combat it with all your strength.

The present administration has sought a certain end without stopping at the means. Shamefully trampling under foot the Constitution and the Laws, it has invaded the judicial and the municipal power ; it determined to subject everything to its haughty will. The judges were no longer to be the ministers of the law ; it was necessary that they should be the instruments of a party blinded with rage and panting for revenge. The citizens presented by the provincial Deputations were not considered worthy to be governors of Provinces ; the government wanted agents to further its plans, and it found fitting tools, and this is the reason of the removals of the governors of Caracas and Carabobo. The Government disarmed the active militia, which is by law entrusted with the defence of their respective districts ; it armed, with all possible haste, the militia of reserve, removed their commanders and officers who had very lately bravely defended their country, and substituted in their places persons guilty of treason, who had been defeated and pardoned ; and it called into service a considerable number of this militia, without the previous authority of the Council of Government. The administration went still further : endeavoring to screen itself from the great responsibility to which it had subjected itself by its violent excesses, treading under foot the laws and all forms, it provided itself with a packed jury, resolved to impose silence by this means on the public press, in order to conceal from the people their true social state.

The Nation, through the public press, protested with energy against the usurpations of the administration endeavoring to obtain a redress of grievances by a constitutional means. This conduct is honorable to the patriotism and civilization of our people ; they suffered, they saw the chains forged to bind them, but there was still a hope to console them ; they resolved to suffer and to wait.

Congress was to meet, and Congress was the hope of the good. That body did meet, and its first steps disclose that they had well comprehended the true situation of the country, and that they had

resolved to remedy it. On the 23d of January both Houses commenced their sessions, and on the same day the House of Representatives resolved to transfer their sittings to Puerto Cabello, by a majority of 32 against 12 votes. On the 24th the same House was engaged in considering the accusation against the President; and the impeachment would have been resolved upon in that sitting, but it was not possible. The administration was determined to save itself, even at the cost of a crime which would tarnish the annals of the Republic, and would sink it in great misfortunes. That same militia of reserve, so much caressed by the government, and which it had beforehand summoned to the capital, became the perpetrators of the sanguinary project. At an appointed hour they left their barracks,—they filed off in front of the Government House,—received from the President of the Republic a salutation and cruel orders, which they blindly obeyed. It was this militia of reserve who trampled down the small guard which Congress, in the use of its powers, had confided to the command of the brave Colonel Smith. It was this militia who fired the first shots against the aforesaid commander of the guard, who unarmed went out to meet the invading force to inquire what orders they had;—it was this militia of reserve that dispersed the Houses of Congress, that butchered brave Representatives and excellent private citizens: it was finally this militia of reserve, quartered by the government and paid by the nation, that assassinated the nation itself in the persons of her Representatives!

Fellow-citizens! A crime unheard of in the history of nations has been perpetrated; a crime that must appal society, and arm good citizens to avenge it. The blood of the Representatives of the people has been shed within the very sanctuary of the laws; the murderous sword severed the heads from the bodies of illustrious victims, and mockery was added to ferocity. The assassins gluttoned in their work, and General José Tadeo Monagas presented himself in the theatre of the slaughter, after it had been consummated. The members of Congress exposed their lives to save the institutions of the Republic; it behooves the Republic to regain that honor, of which her enemies have robbed her, and to punish them in an exemplary manner.

Government attributes to the people of Caracas, and not to the militia, the crime of the 24th of January, and pretends that it could not prevent it. Having possession of the press, and in the midst of the consternation of the inhabitants of the Capital, the Government

ventures to believe that the deed will be handed down to history with the coloring given to it. When the Capital shall have shaken off the yoke that oppresses it, the whole world will be horror-stricken at the recital of details, which I cannot commit to this document. Who assembled in the capital for the 24th of January upwards of 2,000 men of the militia of reserve? By whose order appeared formed in the principal square upwards of 500 of those militia-men on that very day? Who ordered to be stationed at the place of Quebrada Honda, one of the avenues to the city, three hundred of those militia-men, who flew to the centre of the city at the noise of the first firing? Who ordered all the square to be surrounded which contains the building destined for the sittings of Congress? By whose permission were the cannon violently dragged through the public streets? General Monagas ordered everything, and found blind instruments. General Monagas saw pass in front of the Government House the companies of militia that were quartered in the park, with their officers at their head and in hostile array. It is true that an effort was made to implicate the populace, but the latter are excusable to a certain extent, when they are seen to follow the lead and the impulse of the first Magistrate. He who corrupts the populace is answerable for the aberrations of the populace.

One crime leads to another. After the tragedy of the 24th, Government is striving to persuade the country that Congress is constitutionally assembled, and that it is engaged in laboring for the public good. Congress is treated with more severity than a prisoner of war. Under the threats of putting to the sword all the families of the capital in case it did not meet again, those venerable patriots yielded, persuaded of the inutility of resistance. Government thinks that it can legalize by means of this subsequent offence the atrocities of the 24th, but its power does not reach thus far; it may domineer over individuals while it keeps them encompassed with bayonets; but whatever our delegates may sign under the influence of those bayonets, can never, never be binding on the citizens of Venezuela. Let the traitorous administration consider itself, if it please, authorized to form an army of 10,000 men, and to increase the debt of this exhausted country by an additional million of dollars. The days of terror will soon pass over, those of the law will return, and the behest of the law enacted and signed by the free will of their Representatives, will be alone binding upon Venezuelans. The Republic has no Legislative

power at present; its members, watched from the bar of the Houses by Gen. Monagas, are compelled to appease the fury of that tyrant, by obedience to his orders.

Fellow Citizens! the social compact is broken, and the people have resumed their rights. In the exercise of those rights, some of the Cantons have invested me with sufficient authority to organize an army, to avenge the outrages committed against the Republic, to re-establish the empire of the Constitution, and to procure the punishment of the perfidious Magistrate. I have accepted this noble and delicate mission, and I have the joy to announce to you that I am in arms! I have taken up my lance, not to lay it aside until I shall have seen the enemies of my country humbled, and the Constitution of 1830 triumphant. I reckon on all true patriots,—on all those who respect the nationality of Venezuela, and who remember her glorious deeds,—on those who sincerely love liberty and detest tyranny. Venezuela has made bloody sacrifices for that precious Liberty, and should not allow it to be torn from her by a few individuals who, because they once belonged to the Liberating Army, dream now of the subjugation of their country. Implacable enemies of the Constitution, they invoke it only to destroy it, and to murder those who signed it and have sustained it. In 1835 and 1836 Venezuela was saved; why shall she not be saved now, when the horrible project has commenced to be developed in the very Halls of Congress? I have abundant means for the accomplishment of this undertaking, so glorious for our country. Let us give to the world a further proof that Venezuela is incapable of tolerating the deed of the 24th of January, let us prove that General Monagas and those who accompany him are alone responsible for the crime perpetrated on that day!

Fellow citizens! Relying on that protection which Divine Providence has always extended to us, I have determined to save my country; she being free, though I may perish in the combat, I shall descend in peace to my grave.

Headquarters at Calabozo, February 4th, 1848, the 19th year of the Law, and the 38th of Independence.

JOSE A. PAEZ.

## MANIFESTO OF THE GENERAL IN CHIEF, JOSÉ ANTONIO PAEZ.

My country groans under the sword of the assassin of her national Representatives. Venezuelan blood has run upon fields of battle; some of the leaders in the war of independence are wandering about in exile, and hundreds of families are seeking an asylum in foreign lands. Upon my feeble shoulders weighs the difficult charge of saving the people among whom I was born; and I must render to them an account of my conduct, and submit it, likewise, to the judgment of the truly liberal and just throughout the world. These are the reasons for publishing the present manifesto, in which I am compelled to speak of myself, not for the purpose of self-praise, but to relate facts of my public life—facts recorded in my country's history.

In the year 1810 I enrolled myself under the banners of the army which was to achieve the emancipation of my country from its ancient rulers. Although then quite a youth, I at once perceived that the liberating army ought, in all its actions, to show itself worthy of its glorious title. Our mission was to free the country, and to use every exertion to establish and consolidate a civil government. This principle has guided me when obeying and when commanding, and it will be hereinafter seen that I have been always faithful to it.

Colombia was dissolved in 1830, by the will of the several Peoples who composed it. An act of the government of that time hastened the execution of a project which had manifested itself from the time of the publication of the Constitution of 1821. The convention of Ocaña having been dissolved, and the hopes of the Republic having been thus disappointed, the Liberator expressed a desire that the nation should freely declare their wishes; and Venezuela, the first, declared for the "separation of Colombia." The people invested me with the honorable title of "Provisional Chief of the State," and I endeavored to conduct myself in a manner worthy of so great a trust. I summoned a constituent Congress, which met at Valencia; its respectable and enlightened members, carefully selected by the provinces, adopted the Constitution of the republic, and on me devolved the honor of ordering it to be published and obeyed.

The work of that convention has obtained the approbation of

the liberal world ; it has also met with a warm opposition. It was natural to expect this opposition to a law which puts an end to unjust pretensions and to interests which are opposed to those of the majority of the nation. For the first time, I am compelled to publish what Venezuela well knows, viz : that it was owing to the decided support of my authority, and to the discreet exercise of the influence with which my fellow-citizens favored me, that the constituent Congress was not interrupted in the performance of its solemn duties. A portion of the army, not sufficiently well informed of the nature of their rights and duties, could not patiently brook the discussion respecting the abolition of military privileges, and I was obliged to appeal to the patriotism of these brave men, and to the regard with which they had constantly distinguished me, to prevent a scandal and allow the representatives of the people freely to pursue the course they had traced out. I succeeded in dispelling the storm ; but the spirit of rebellion continued to produce bad effects.

In 1831 I was called to the Presidency, and shortly after having taken possession of it I was compelled to take the field to put down a military rebellion. Without bloodshed I succeeded in re-establishing order, and the head of the conspiracy, General José Tadeo Monagas, returned to his home, protected by a pardon which I granted him in the Valle de la Pascua. There were subsequent attempts at military conspiracies during the first constitutional period, but without serious consequences to the Republic.

The nation selected for their first magistrate, in 1835, the eminent citizen Doctor José Vargas. As a civilian, whose past life had been most honorable, he afforded an ample guaranty to the nation that the government would be administered honestly and impartially ; but another military conspiracy came again to destroy these flattering hopes. The government appointed me General-in-Chief of the Constitutional Army, at the head of which I was obliged to go into the interior of the eastern part of Venezuela ; and on the savannas of the Pirital I pardoned, for a second time, Gen. José Tadeo Monagas, the leader of the rebellion, and I secured him the possession of his military rank and of his fortune. Shortly after this, Puerto Cabello surrendered—the last entrenchment of the disturbers of the public peace ; and with this event ended the misfortunes of that year.

My position, during the periods I have mentioned, was a difficult one, and most delicate. On the one hand I was obliged to re-

strain the military, who, forgetful of their duty, turned against their country the arms which she had confided to them for her defence ; and on the other hand, I endeavored to temper the ardent zeal of the friends of the Constitution. Placed in the midst of these contending passions, I aspired only to perform the office of conciliator. If I condemned the exactions of some military men, I still endeavored, on all occasions, to lighten their sufferings and to attract to them the public regard, calling to mind their former services in the cause of independence. I refer, as proof, to my messages to Congress, in which I recommended that those who had been exiled should be restored to their country—should be incorporated in the army and continued in their offices. As President, I conferred on them posts of honor and of trust ; and as chief of the army, I called them around me in the trials of the country. Some of them have shown themselves grateful for this my conduct : but others, who have never been reconciled to our institutions, have always excited and fomented seditions, though threatening destruction to the land of their birth.

By the votes of my fellow citizens I again assumed the administration of the State in 1839. During this third period, the passions, somewhat abashed, subsided, and my administration was a peaceful one. It was assiduously and laboriously devoted to the intellectual and material progress of the country. A sound public opinion has judged of the result. I may be allowed only to add, that I omitted nothing to improve the situation of the country. Great reforms were undertaken and carried into effect. Without requiring an army, I preserved internal peace, and carefully cultivated and enlarged our foreign relations—being persuaded that this friendly intercourse would procure us a suitable rank in the great family of nations. On this point I was persevering. A new people, and of scant population, necessarily requires the support of more advanced nations ; and it was with satisfaction that I saw Venezuela recommending herself for her habits of moderation and fraternity in the estimation of those foreigners who acquired a residence within her territory. How advantageous this conduct was to the Republic is proved by the progress of its commerce and agriculture up to 1846—a progress which our faithful statistical data do not permit us to doubt.

In order to complete our relations with friendly powers, I devoted in part my most earnest attention to the settlement of our foreign debt, and I had the satisfaction to accomplish it. This

was an act of justice, deferred by reason of the circumstances which surrounded Colombia, and subsequently, Venezuela. Those individuals who had opportunely aided us in gaining our independence had a perfect right to demand that their claims should be attended to and considered. The acknowledgment of our foreign debt, its liquidation, and the punctual payment of the interest, gained credit and character for Venezuela, and obtained for her many honorable marks of distinction. Thanks to the peace with which Providence favored the country during the second period of my administration, our credit was maintained and advanced at home, and established and strengthened abroad; *a portion—no inconsiderable one—of our foreign and domestic debt was paid*; and on my retiring from office, on the 20th of January 1843, *a surplus was left in the national treasury of very near three millions of dollars.*

If in the administration of the government I constantly exerted myself faithfully to fulfil my duties, I endeavored in private life to conduct myself as a sincere republican. The public saw me always devoted with ardor, and even with enthusiasm, to the cultivation of my lands and in promoting the raising of cattle, an occupation for which I have felt a special preference. But as we met with the serious inconvenience of a scarcity of hands, I encouraged, first in the cabinet, and afterwards by means of private associations, the immigration of foreigners. Happy efforts were made in this respect, and that great element of prosperity would have flowed abundantly into our country, had public order remained unaltered. I have promoted by all possible means within my reach the progress of the country, being fully convinced that the love of industry, and the results issuing therefrom, would consolidate our institutions.

But evil passions interposed to check the progressive march of Venezuela. A systematic opposition undertook the unpatriotic task of throwing discredit on the laws and the magistrates—of impeaching the character of those men who had faithfully served the cause of independence and of liberty. Doctrines the most subversive of social order, were instilled into the masses: a divorce was sought to be established between rich and poor—between creditors and debtors—between masters and servants. Good citizens were overconfident; they were not fully aware of the risk which the institutions ran, and bad citizens gained ground. A portion of the people allowed themselves to be seduced by exaggerated notions of liberty, and soon very marked symptoms of anarchy showed themselves.

Such was our social state in 1846, when an election of President was to take place for the next succeeding period. Some individuals brought my name forward for that elevated post; but I hastened to proclaim, through the public press, my resolution of not accepting that office a third time. Having been invited by several citizens of Barcelona to give my support to Monagas as a candidate, I signified by letter the satisfaction with which I would see that chief at the head of the administration. This was not a mere complimentary act; the love of my country, which was seriously threatened, led me to take this step. If I erred, I am guilty only for this error; but not at all of having wished to injure the Republic. I thought that General Monagas would come to the first post in the nation without prejudices, and that, in consequence of his being an old leader, the father of a family, and an extensive proprietor, he would give his decided support to the cause of order. The Republic feared that the contrary might be the case; patriotic citizens were always distrustful of the intentions of General Monagas, and up to the very eve of the election, a large majority declared itself strongly opposed to his election. I have never had more reason to be grateful to my fellow-citizens than when, in deference to my suggestions, they decided in favor of a candidate, who in their opinion afforded no security for the principles proclaimed in 1830. My fellow-citizens were right and I was prepossessed. I judged General Monagas not as he was, but such as he ought to be. I thought him reconciled to his country's institutions, and to the men who have supported them. Never did he receive offence from these men. In his repeated rebellions he was always an object of public commiseration. It fell to my lot to command the army sent against him, and I disarmed him without employing other arms than those of reason, of justice, and arguments founded on public convenience. Since 1835 General Monagas had been reposing at his home in peace, under the protection of the Constitution, promoting his interests, in the possession of his military rank, and receiving the pay appointed by law. The same national party who opposed General Monagas in 1831 and in 1835, elevated him to the Presidency in 1847. Might it not have been expected that he would prove faithful to the principles that had controlled his election; that he would show himself grateful for the generosity of those who at one time were his political opponents? The country had a right to expect such a result; but the return has been a barbarous assassination of the people's Representatives!

I was at Caracas when General Monagas swore before Congress to support the Constitution, and I was a witness of the first acts of his administration; they disarmed party spirit, and promised future tranquillity. Such was the position of affairs when my duties as Chief of the army, compelled me in the latter part of March, to quit the capital. I was at a very great distance, when I received the news of the first aberrations of General Monagas. I sincerely deplored them; yet I harbored the hope that the responsibility he incurred and the immense danger to which he exposed the republic, would cause him to retrace his steps. I was also mistaken this time. In the midst of the excitement manifested in consequence of notorious abuse of power, I labored strenuously, advising calmness and forbearance; and I was always found ready to make every sacrifice to save the country. Thus, when in the latter part of December of last year, General Monagas wrote to me signifying his desire to have an interview with me in the place of Las Cocuisas, I answered him satisfactorily, and I immediately commenced my journey to meet him. General Monagas did not fulfil his word, given to me of his own free will, and under the pretence of illness, he avoided a meeting sought by himself; and I returned to my home with very sad presentiments.

I hastened forthwith to quit the country, and to go into New Granada, having previously obtained permission for that purpose from the government. On the 3d of January I left Maracay, and on the night of the 26th I received at Calabozo, the astounding news of the horrid crime perpetrated in Caracas, against the Representatives of the people on the 24th of the same month. Deeply moved at this first intelligence, the subsequent news, and the public declarations of some towns, made me take the resolution expressed in my letter of the 31st of January to General Monagas, and in my address of the 4th of February. Both these documents will be found in an appendix to this manifesto. When I published them I was not in possession of details of which I have been subsequently well informed. I did not know for instance, that the Senate of the Republic, having been escorted to the government house by 200 armed men, entreated General Monagas to show himself in the place where Congress was assembled, and to order the firing against the representatives to cease, and that the General answered coldly, "I am told that I ought not to go"—and continued for two hours amusing himself hearing the noise of a lively firing. I did not know that the respectable Colonel Smith, bathed in his own blood,

carried on men's shoulders to the Government House, and reclining upon a sofa, did not receive the slightest mark of attention, not even a solitary expression of kindness, from General Monagas. I did not know that the Representatives of the people, made prisoners of by the militia, were instantly presented to General Monagas, who cast looks of contempt on some of them, and tormented others with cruel sarcasm, and abandoned all to the ferocity of his agents. I did not know that General Santiago Mariño, shut up in the Convent of San Jacinto with 500 men, was urged by a chief and several officers to hasten to the spot where Congress was sitting in order to prevent the butchery of the Representatives ; and that this General contemptuously disregarded the request, saying, (these were his own words) "that what was passing was no great matter." I did not know that before the butchery commenced, all the outlets of the city were obstructed by the public force. Finally, I did not know other details, which I shall mention in the course of this instrument, should I deem it absolutely necessary.

It was my duty not to hesitate from the moment I became convinced that General Monagas had changed the honorable title of President of the Republic for the abominable office of the assassin of the people's Representatives. The crime filled me with horror ; I saw my country annihilated, her name tarnished, her glories belied, and the sword of a blood-thirsty tyrant hanging over the heads of good citizens. Followed by a few men I moved to El Rastre on the 27th of January in the morning. I there received the letter of General Monagas, the answer to which I have already cited ; and there, as the fruit of my meditations, and the result of my profound convictions, and accepting the new honor conferred on me by my fellow-citizens, I determined to direct to them my address of the 4th of February. I was aware then of the difficulty of the position which I assumed. Without an army, without arms of any kind, because General Monagas had cautiously taken possession of them all ; without money, in fine, without the elements necessary to resist a tyrant, who, abusing the respectable names of government, Constitution, and laws, had been preparing himself for a whole year to inflict a mortal blow upon society, I determined, notwithstanding, to run all imaginable risks, to save my name at least from infamy. Could I have acted otherwise ? Could I continue in the country, a silent spectator of what had passed and of what was feared for the future, or continue my journey to New Granada to remain indifferent to the afflicting situation of

Venezuela? I could have saved myself from the general conflagration; but what would I save? The days which remain to me of life, and my individual fortune! I would be unworthy even of the name of a patriot, if, having obtained from Venezuela the title of Illustrious, I abandoned her in her most terrible tribulation, in order to preserve in exchange, a mere physical existence. A soldier of honor—of honor accorded to him for more than a hundred battles, all glorious for the State—cannot harbor in his breast the calculations of cold selfishness. My honor and political conscience advised me to the act of the 4th of February, and I think, I have given another proof of fidelity to my high duties.

For fifteen days I remained at El Rastro, accompanied only by fifty men. The constant solicitations which I received from the patriots of Apure urging me to come and head the movement which they wished to make in favor of the cause of order, and the convictions I entertained that our forces ought to take possession of that place, determined me to march upon it on the 15th of February, followed by 200 men, who, by that time, had joined me. On the 20th of the same month I entered San Fernando, where I was received with public and solemn proofs of the patriotism which has always distinguished its inhabitants. They had strongly declared against the crime of the 24th of January and for the punishment of its execrable author. The inhabitants of Apure flocked from all quarters to offer their co-operation in defence of the national cause, and I earnestly devoted myself to organize the basis of an army. I was compelled to interrupt this labor in consequence of the information I was constantly receiving of the violent means used by General Muñoz to collect men to defend the assassinations of the 24th of January. The same language was used everywhere the Constitution was on their lips, but their acts proved the existence of a despotic power. Gen Muñoz compelled all to follow him, threatening them with death, and he seized their property in a barbarous manner. Let one act reveal the morality which prevailed in the councils of Gen. Muñoz. Manuel Segovia left Muñoz's encampment, in the early part of last February, with orders to bring, alive or dead, before that chief, N. Hernandez, son-in-law of said Segovia, who faithfully executed the order. Segovia, escorted by six assassins, surprised Hernandez at his house and assassinated him. The father murders the son! A worthy offering from the defenders of the 24th of January to the Constitution of 1830! Gen Muñoz rewarded Segovia by making him captain;

but Divine Providence, always just, decreed that Segovia should be among the first to perish at the points of the lances of the friends of order, on the 10th of March.

The nation would have speedily recovered its freedom, tyranny would have perished the moment it showed itself, and the tyrant would have been now suffering the consequences of his atrocious wickedness, if an act that finds no parallel in the history of similar events had not intervened to complicate the evils of my country. I refer to the reassembling of the Houses on the 26th of January. I have not ceased testifying my respect and admiration for those distinguished Senators and Representatives who, on the 24th of January, resolved to die in their seats to cement with their blood the institutions of the republic. I see them, subsequently, meet in Congress on the 26th, in blind obedience to the despot, and approve, without discussion, acts which vilify the country, and which suddenly, but effectually, change the Venezuelan character from intelligent, brave and noble, into stupid, cowardly and mean. My pen here runs with difficulty. I am transported by the heroic conduct of the Representatives of Venezuela on the 24th of January; but when attempting to describe the proceedings beginning on the 26th, I feel my hand tremble—my heart palpitates, and my head is disturbed. I read the protests of the Arellanos, the Rafael Lozadas, the Carreras and the Soteldos, and I applaud the manly effort made by these worthy Representatives to aid the cause of the restoration; but I lament that so noble and resolute an act has not been imitated by other chosen ones of the people. I can draw but a very faint sketch of this scene. The act is before my country; public opinion there will judge of it.

On the day of the trial and sentence of the celebrated cause to be prosecuted against the Great Assassin, it will be a difficult matter to decide that the crime of the 24th is greater than that of the 26th of January. On the former day General Monagas acted like an enraged tyrant, commanding the murder of the Congress that was about to try him. On the latter, General Monagas made use of that very Congress to legalize his sanguinary conduct and to strengthen his power. On the 24th, General Monagas, like a self-satisfied conqueror upon a glorious battle-field, graciously granted the boon of life to the Representatives who were presented before him as prisoners of war; and on the 26th, Congress grants a pardon to General Monagas and to his accomplices in the atrocities of the 24th. With the annihilation of Congress, General Monagas

crowned his work of revenge against a country that had never offended him. Never was there seen a people more humbled than Venezuela since the 24th of January. She must soon give to the world a great, a powerful proof, in order to efface the ignominious stamp which General Monagas endeavored to put upon her proud front—upon the front of a people up to that time justly proud. History records the existence of tyrants who attained power through a series of violence—sacrificing those who opposed them; but it was reserved for General Monagas to stain his hands in the innocent blood of some representatives, and to transform afterwards the survivors of the catastrophe into his councillors and zealous panegyrists. Only by this extraordinary, scandalous means has General Monagas been enabled to prolong his immoral power, and to delay the nation's triumph. This criminal deception is the cause of the prejudice of the ignorant portion of the people, which assents to what is told to them in the name of Congress and of Government, not knowing that both ceased to exist on the 24th of January. The acts of General Monagas, in the name of the Constitution, after that ill-fated day, are a mockery. The Constitution of 1830 fell prostrate under the daggers of the assassins of Congress.

Notwithstanding the severe means of coercion employed by General Monagas to keep Congress together, some facts revealed to him the insufficiency of his power to accomplish that object. From the 18th of February to the 12th of March it was not possible to assemble the House of Representatives. When did Venezuela witness so great an interruption in the labors of her Legislature? Does not this occurrence confirm all that has been written respecting the violent means employed to assemble Congress after the 24th of January? These facts speak for themselves—they need no comment.

“The sword,” says Segur, “is a bad sceptre; sooner or later it wounds the prince who rests upon it.” Gen. Monagas is involved in the horrors of a crime to which he was drawn by his perfidy, by his ancient hatred against the institutions of Venezuela. In the moments of surprise, he has succeeded in deceiving the people with false promises respecting liberty. Whenever the fulfillment of these promises shall be demanded, then will he border on despair. The people desire liberal institutions; General Monagas has an idol, to which he sacrifices everything—military power; but military power and a republican government are incompatible. “Every military government,” says Segur likewise, “unites in it-

self all the vices of despotism, and all the dangers of anarchy"—a principle of eternal truth, but one unknown to General Monagas. In 1846, he was, for a few days, at the head of a division; he did not fight a single battle; yet he pretended, without the knowledge of the General-in-Chief, that government should obtain from Congress the promotion of a multitude of officers.

How will General Monagas satisfy the people and the tumultuous army he has formed? How will he maintain that army with the scanty resources of the nation? How will he gratify so many pretensions opposed to the interests of the country? General Monagas might solve all these doubts by firmly establishing a despotic government. This is his aim; and he has begun by arousing a martial spirit, by diverting men from their former habits, and giving them new ones. He reckons upon the fatigue which the people must at last experience from the agitation in which they are kept, and he thinks of improving that moment to spring at once from a noisy liberty into a systematized tyranny. Will General Monagas have the courage and the means necessary to accomplish this undertaking? The day is fast approaching when the delusion will vanish.

My countrymen will soon hear Colombia spoken of; they will hear of her past glories, and the necessity of reviving them. This is the day-dream of General Monagas, and of the other leaders who rushed into the rebellion of 1835. Let the history of that period be consulted, and it will disclose the opinions of General Monagas, and the steps he took in favor of the re-organization of Colombia. A peaceful and laborious people, who have relished so much the fruits of peace, are sought to be transformed into a nation of soldiers, the more easily to accomplish the change. Everything is directed towards that object; the nation feels and sees it; and the masses are allowed no time to reflect upon it. The state of prostration into which the republic has fallen greatly assists the plan. The national credit has disappeared, both at home and abroad, and the failure to fulfil our sacred engagements in this respect, will occasion days of sorrow to Venezuela. The forced loans, which have been exacted, have considerably reduced the means of capitalists; agriculture is depressed; commerce has fled terrified from our cities; the mechanic finds no occupation, and the laborer must become a soldier—a lamentable and unnatural situation, aggravated by that species of paper money contained in the so-called Law of Bonds. Society must struggle to rescue her.

self from this extraordinary position. In the midst of this chaos, the reformers of 1835, and of the 24th of January last, will cry out, "Colombia!"—but I cherish the hope that Venezuela will defend her nationality and the principles of just and rational liberty; that the prophecies of those who aspire to establish the dominion of the sword over intelligence and disinterested patriotism shall not be fulfilled; that Heaven will not permit those to triumph who, since 1830, have doomed to death the advocates of the separation of Venezuela.

If I had not a great respect for public opinion, I would be totally indifferent to the charge preferred by certain papers of New Granada, and one of Venezuela, when they wish to ascribe to me a part in the project of reviving Colombia under a monarchical form. I concerned in such a plan! I, the most known among the friends of the separation of Venezuela, long before that measure was sanctioned! This is an opinion adopted by me from the time of the organization of Colombia, and every day confirms me in that opinion. If a display of the united forces of an immense territory did contribute to the triumph of independence, experience showed soon after that the union was opposed to the development, the social progress and perfection of the three States. New Granada and Equador have only in common with Venezuela the efforts made by the three sections to gain their independence from Spain. In others respects, each State has a character, occupation and habits, very peculiar to itself. The plan proposed might satisfy the ambition of some persons, and gratify an insane pride; but it never can contribute to the happiness of those nations whose consolidation is sought. I here enter my most solemn protest against this mad plan; if ever my country shall adopt it, be it known from this moment, that my wishes have had no part in it.

The enemies of liberty in Colombia, and in Venezuela, have latterly imputed to me their own political aberrations. I have kept silence through moderation and love of my country; but the interests of that country and my own personal reputation, require that I should no longer remain silent. *It is a fact which admits of no contradiction, that in 1829, a change of the form of government in Colombia, from republican into monarchical, was seriously entertained. The public press then revealed that plan in which many members of the government and other distinguished personages of that day were concerned. I was invited, formally urged, to concur in the project; but I rejected it with all my strength. I have sufficient motives for believ-*

*ing that my opposition was decisive in causing the project to be withdrawn, because the persons who wrote to me in favor of it made its success depend upon the disposition which Venezuela might manifest. Before this, the Bolivian constitution had been recommended to me, and I likewise declared my opinion in terms of strong opposition to it. I have important documents relative to my conduct in those hazardous times, but I have them not at present at my disposal ; I shall soon have them in my possession, and shall publish them. In the mean time, it behooves those who assail my reputation to publish the documentary proofs of the facts on which they rely. I boldly contradict my enemies, with that perfect confidence which is inspired by a sound conscience ; by a conduct which was never equivocal. Without further explanations on this subject I might give it up, and continue, as I am, tranquil in my position. It is proper, notwithstanding, for the honor of Venezuela, and of those who have faithfully served her, that I should add a few remarks.*

In 1829 I was Superior Chief in Venezuela, with extraordinary powers, and I had under my orders an army of brave soldiers. If I had had any sympathy for, or taken any part in, the project of a monarchy, would I have assisted, as I did decidedly assist, in the separation of Venezuela ? Would I have shortly afterwards summoned a Convention which was to confirm the public declarations of the people ? Would I have thrown myself into the midst of the military, in order to obtain a docile submission to the sovereign will of the nation from these my companions in arms, who were indignant at the decree of Congress abolishing their privileges ? Would I, in fine, have given the order for carrying into execution a Constitution acknowledged as the most liberal one in the American republics ? These acts, quite prominent in my political life, shield me against defamation. Public men must endure calumny with composure ; I think I have been well tried in this respect. I have always observed a moderate and prudent conduct when I was pertinaciously slandered by the press ; by this means I succeeded, at one period, in confounding my calumniators.

If in times when Colombia was governed by a dictatorial power, and when a leader of great name and influence presided, I combated the project of a monarchy, how can I entertain it at present, when Colombia is dissolved, and after Venezuela has enjoyed, through my efforts and my fidelity, the advantages of a liberal system of government ? Would I, in the last period of my life, give the lie to the character which I have maintained during more

than two-thirds of that life? Do not all my acts, up to the present time, show that I have labored for the welfare of the people, and that I am incapable of being a traitor to them? What is shown by the extensive private correspondence which I have maintained in the provinces of Venezuela? I authorize all persons to publish the letters which they may have received from me on political matters. I include in this authority General Monagas, whose correspondence with me must be known by the public. A citizen who acts with such frankness has a right to be heard, even by his opponents. But I strive in vain. The very persons who endeavor to wound my feelings are quite sensible of their own injustice.

The hand of Providence has guided me in such a manner that my acts constitute an impenetrable barrier against malevolence. What can be adduced against these constant acts of my life? Is it the trick, more stupid than wicked, contained in the official note signed by General Muñoz relative to the encounter of the 10th of March? I permit four hundred men to proclaim me king in a desert! And this foolish trick is adopted by an ancient magistrate, who seals his public career by taking the place of General Monagas in the bloody chair of State! Gen. Muñoz should never have yielded to an impulse which sinks him to the level of degraded souls. He had no necessity to employ so base an artifice in order to maintain himself in the post which he selected. Besides, Gen. Muñoz knows me well. For many years, and in different situations of my life, he has tried my character and penetrated my most inward sentiments. Fortune has placed us now in opposite ranks; but it is in war that a gentleman can best display his chivalry. There are attentions which confer more honor on him who bestows than on him who receives them. If my letter to General Monagas, and my address of the 4th of February, be not sufficient to protect me from the snares laid for me by the enemies of my country, they have in their possession other documents of which they can make use. On the 10th of March, my papers fell into the hands of General Muñoz. If he would publish them, without alteration, they would make out the most complete defence of my conduct.

The contents of the official note signed by General Muñoz is in open contradiction with the object which that chief proposes to himself. In order to exaggerate his victory, he states the number of his forces as five hundred, and raises mine to eight hundred, when he knows, from my correspondence, from the statements

made out by the commanders of the corps, and when the fact is well established in Apure, that what is called my army did not on the 10th of March exceed the number of four hundred and twenty men. General Muñoz says, "that the engagement was as horrible as any he ever witnessed in the war of independence \* \* \* that he had been left alone on the field of battle \* \* \* that his foot forces were surrounded by mine; and that this was a most trying moment \* \* \* that accompanied only by his aid-de-camp Marquez he advanced against my forces, and succeeded in cutting his way through them \* \* \* that by two o'clock in the afternoon he had only been able to collect together two hundred men. \* \* \*"

Do not these admissions of General Muñoz prove that he was beaten on the 10th of March, and that, through one of those accidents not unfrequent in war, he remained in Apure and I was obliged to leave it?

In truth, General Muñoz was completely defeated, but we could not gather the fruits of the victory. We were prevented from obtaining them, through the weakness of one of the commanders of my cavalry who occupied my left wing. He faced about at the first firing; his men entangled those of the next corps, who in turn threw into disorder the corps stationed immediately after them, and the clouds of dust raised by the running of the horses completed the confusion. I made every effort to prevent it, but to no purpose; I wanted officers to assist me: I had not even an officer of Staff on that day. Whilst I was struggling to collect my men, the brave Colonel Castejon, who had penetrated on my right with sixty men of my guard into the heart of the enemy's forces, routed them completely, cutting them up in a frightful manner. It is true that upwards of two hundred were killed; but they belonged to the forces of General Muñoz. Let him prove what he has falsely asserted. Nearly all the men whom I had under my command on that day are now in Apure and Calabozo: I am sure that I did not lose more than twenty men. Let General Muñoz state and prove where the three hundred soldiers are, who he says were dispersed from his army; the widows and orphans, and the twenty prisoners I took from him will answer him. General Muñoz himself admitted his defeat in an official communication addressed by him to Farfan, where he says, "that although he had gained a victory, he had lost nearly all his men, and he wanted assistance from him." Col. Castejon occupied the battle ground for upwards of three hours, and the enemy who had escaped from our hands did

not even think of molesting him. He then determined to join me; but unfortunately we took different directions, and we did not meet.

Such is the truth of what occurred on the 10th of March. The exaggerations of General Muñoz, the falsehoods he has asserted under his signature, and the injurious language he uses in all his despatches have no power to change facts. I leave him for the present, vain with his triumph. I shall pursue my course, fully persuaded that the people of Venezuela will not allow themselves to be ruled by crime and depravity.

A pamphlet entitled "Essay upon the Social Condition of the States of Colombia" has been very lately published at Bogota. It is written by the learned Doctor Florentino Gonzales, who was very recently Secretary of the Treasury. The distinguished author fully approves the declaration of Venezuela against the abominable acts of General Monagas, and expresses his detestation of the bloody scene in the following terms :

"From the moment that the leaders of that majority slew the Representatives of the people because they exercised a power conferred on them by the Constitution, which those leaders pretend to defend, they have put themselves in the wrong, and they can only rely on physical force. The crime of the 24th of February destroyed the claims of those who style themselves democrats, and conferred on the minority the right to defend themselves and to establish institutions that may secure to all the citizens of the nation the right to the enjoyment of the social privileges. Right is on the side of those who have refused to acknowledge the acts of a Congress decimated by assassination, and who deliberate under the daggers of the minions of power. Sound principles do not recognise this species of legislation—they do not admit tyranny veiled with the outer form of liberty. Such a legislature, then, cannot command obedience through the faction headed by the government, and the insurrection of those who have refused to acknowledge such a government is legitimate. \* \* \*

"Let the champion who has undertaken to redress the outrage perpetrated against the national representation by the crime of the 24th of January remain faithful to the principles of right, and the triumph, though it may come late, is sure."

I shall remain faithful—yes, ever faithful—to the principles which constitute the glorious device of South America.

Let the assassins of Congress delight to tear my reputation ; it is not a fragile reed which yields to every passing wind ; it is the result of a whole life consecrated to my country. Has she not a hundred times proclaimed me her saviour ? Have I not defended

her with my sword in all her conflicts? Can General José T. Monagas, and the other chiefs who have rebelled against society, say as much? General Monagas, the bitter enemy of the institutions of Venezuela, leader of the conspirators of 1831 and 1835, is the same person who, as President of the republic, directed the assassination of the Representatives of the people; and the chiefs who surround him, his famous captains, are the authors of the scandals of Colombia—blind partisans of the Bolivian constitution—monarchists of yesterday, and to-day, liberals.

The present situation of Venezuela is truly anarchical. How can the assassins of Congress extenuate the outbreak of the 18th of April—an imitation of the 24th of January, though not attended with all its horrors? What is improperly called the people in Caracas, instigated by two or three seditious individuals by profession, placed a second time in imminent peril the lives of the members of Congress, who, to save themselves, were compelled to abandon a project of amnesty, which they had under consideration and immediately to adjourn. Is there a government where a tumultuous assemblage of people commands obedience from the very sovereignty of the nation? From the moment that the rulers of a nation, for the purpose of maintaining their places, in order to consummate the ruin of their country, permit a fraction of the people to decide upon the greatest interests of the nation, the moment such rulers declare themselves incapable of restraining the excesses of an unbridled faction, the conclusion is a necessary one, that such a body politic is ruled by chance—by the caprice of a few madmen, who have usurped the place of the public power; and such an anomalous state of things cannot, from its very violence, exist. A re-action is fast approaching with irresistible force. Whatever efforts the Great Assassin and his accomplices may make to arrest it, will avail nothing against the firm resolves of patriotism, which this time will successfully employ the arms of national good sense and justice, outraged on the ill-fated 24th of January. Venezuela, and particularly Caracas, will show their gratitude, as soon as they are allowed, for the noble conduct observed on the 24th of January by the respectable majority of the representatives of friendly powers near the Republic. One of these honorable gentlemen was compelled to contend, in his own house, with the leaders of the assassins, and many persecuted persons owed their safety to the firmness of his conduct. May those public benefactors and faithful friends of my country accept the acknow-

ledgment, which I feel myself compelled to tender them here, of respect, of regard, of sincere and profound gratitude.

My present position has imposed on me a duty which I have endeavored to discharge in this document. May I, by this means, satisfy my fellow citizens, and offer to all the friends of rational liberty an undoubted proof of the religious respect which I have for it. Public men do not belong to themselves—they belong to the nation that has formed and honored them. This conviction has led me always to forget myself to follow the fortunes of my country. She is now plunged in the most bitter misfortune. The order of law which has prevailed in Venezuela has been succeeded by violence and oppression; a change attended by such fatal circumstances that the imminent danger may be predicted of a portion of society, who, in the career of independence and of liberty, spared no sacrifices. Intelligence, property, personal influence, all contributed to the cause of emancipation. The magistrate to whom my unhappy country entrusted her destinies last year has become her cruel enemy. Gen. José Tadeo Monagas has usurped the exercise of an arbitrary power, and to maintain it has excited the worst passions of one portion of society against the other, and he has called around him individuals the most notorious for their crimes and for their participation in the different conspiracies which have agitated Venezuela. The halls of Congress and the fields of battle are still smoking with the blood of most worthy Representatives, of other distinguished patriots, and of brave soldiers. A traitor's dagger pierced the heart of the distinguished citizen, the Hon. Santos Michelena. In him Venezuela has lost the ornament of her civilians; and my companions in arms, the defenders of law, ought forever to bear a badge of mourning for the loss of the modest Gen. Piñango. He fought bravely, and having been wounded by a bullet fell from his horse; the blood-thirsty enemy seized upon the illustrious victim, and hastened his death by abandoning him to the most cruel sufferings. They would not allow compassionate strangers to discharge a duty respected even among savages. The dead body of General Piñango, clothed in the habiliments of a beggar, served in Coro to proclaim the barbarities of the sanguinary legions of Gen. Monagas. What feelings do these ferocious acts produce on true patriots? What are the duties imposed upon the sound part of the citizens of Venezuela, who have escaped the catastrophe? What do the widows and the orphans demand of us? What is due to those honest families who are living crowded toge-

ther in foreign islands? What is demanded of us by that imposing spectacle of fathers of families, the victims of the most infamous spoliation, whose property, seized upon by the army of General Monagas, has lately been carried away to the eastern part of Venezuela? All require us to sacrifice ourselves to obtain an expiation of the crime which has covered the republic with mourning. Let an effort be made, and a thunder-bolt will fall upon the heads of the assassins. Let us encounter the danger, and the republic will efface the ignominious stain imprinted upon her by the impious hand of Gen. Monagas.

Through our efforts, the name of Venezuela will be again inscribed on the great book of nations. Let us prove that we love our country and that we are Republicans at heart. Let the enormity of the crime which has disgraced the republic—the greatness of her loss—inspire us.

Fellow countrymen!—I am very near to you. Providence preserves my life to serve you—to aid you in the glorious struggle which is to restore to us the dignity of freemen. In the war of Independence, as you well know, my life was exposed to a thousand dangers, in order to secure a country. You shall now see me contend against the domestic tyrant with the same zeal—with greater enthusiasm. My resolution is taken; it is irrevocable. I must combat, if necessary, for the remainder of my life, in defence of the liberties of the republic. Should it not be my fortune to succeed—should it be decreed that in this contest I must pay the debt I owe to nature—others will continue the work with ardor, and, perhaps, with greater risk to the assassins of our country. I shall have fulfilled the most sacred of my duties.

JOSÉ A. PAEZ.

*St. Thomas, August 1st, 1848.*

*U.S. cl. 10*

*Soc. 1000*

*B.G. Shields sent to Baltimore 6 Spanish copy of this  
Venezuelan Declaration Vol. VI. Also an account of  
it by Rafael Hernandez. Average claim 1848  
Quintana published (a) 1848 - 1849*



# IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

IN RELATION TO THE

PRESENT SITUATION

OF

## V E N E Z U E L A ;

AND THE ATTEMPT OF

### GENERAL JOSE TADEO MONAGAS

TO ESTABLISH A

### DESPOTIC GOVERNMENT

IN THAT COUNTRY:

WITH A FEW INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

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NEW-YORK:

1848.



National Intelligencer

Washington city  
D.C.



PAID

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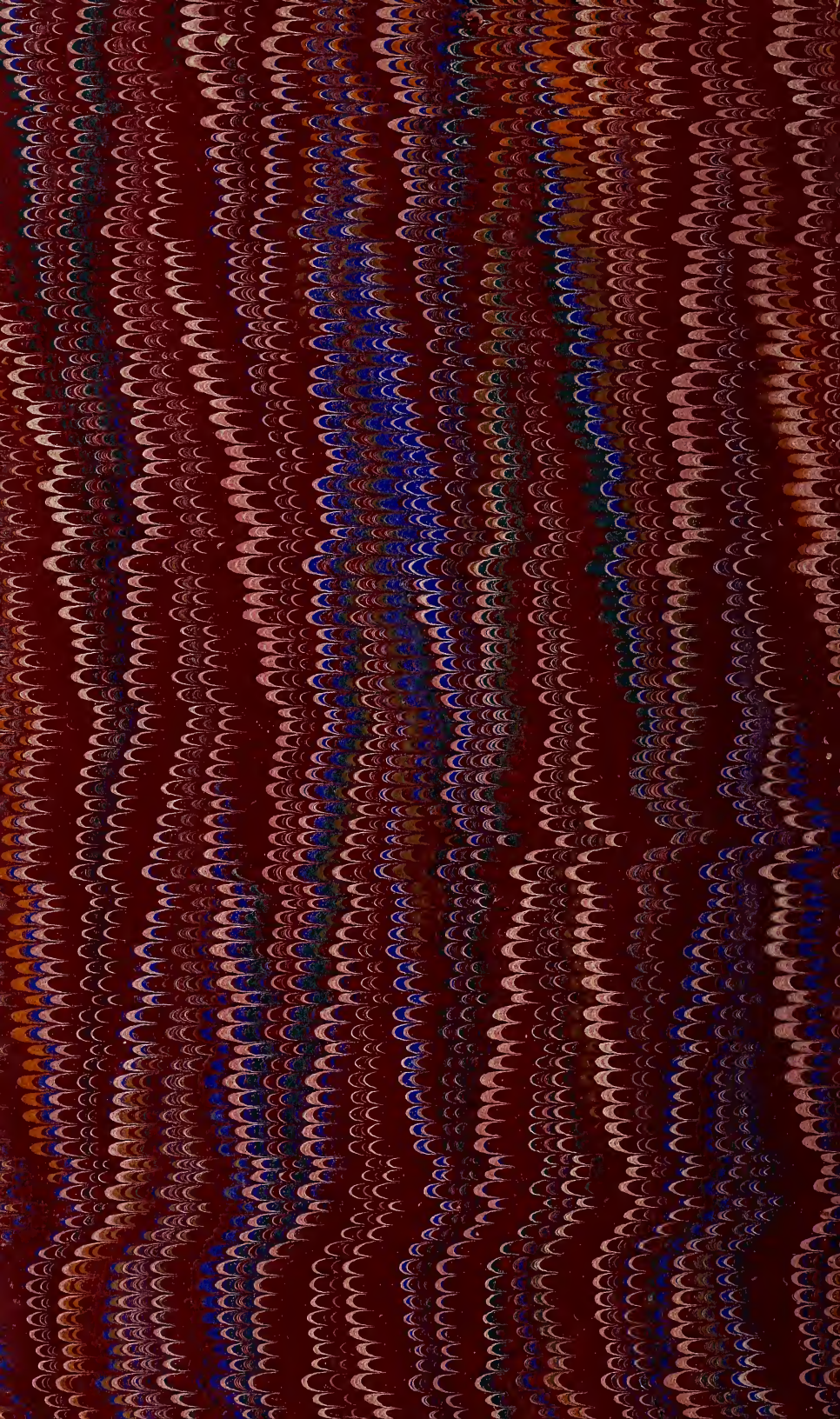


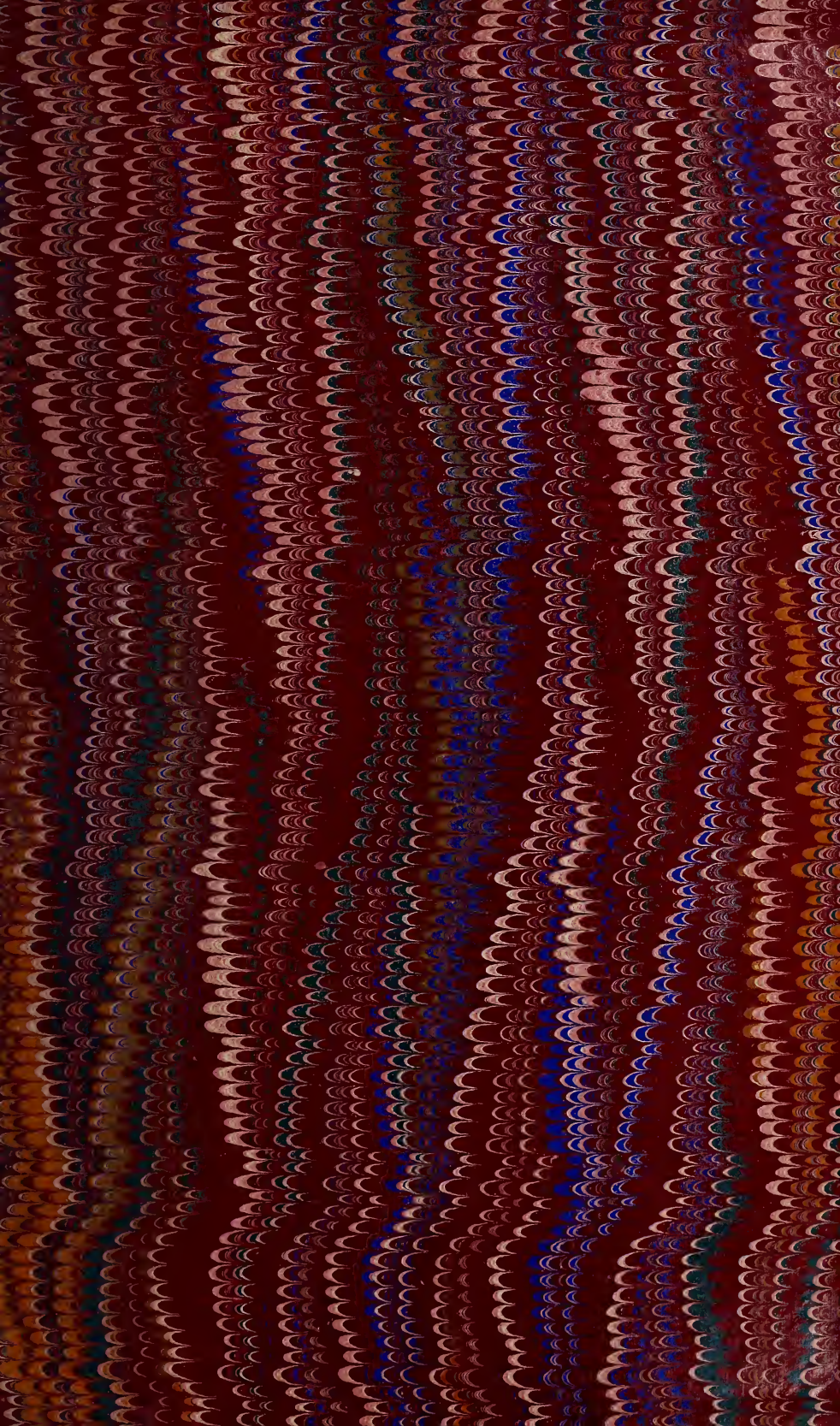












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